

What About a Second Opinion?

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A second opinion for the cosmetic surgery patient helps to ensure that the procedure being performed will best match the patient's needs and desires.

It is important to seek a second opinion from a board certified plastic surgeon that is certified by The American Board of Plastic Surgery. There are other boards that qualify their members to perform cosmetic surgery, however, only the American Board of Medical Specialties accredits the American Board of Plastic Surgery.

There are other steps a cosmetic surgery patient can take to better assure the quality of their surgeon:

1. Ask your family physician or gynecologist who they would recommend.
2. Call your local hospital and ask for the names of plastic surgeons on staff.
3. Talk to friends and relatives about their experiences.
4. Inquire in the state medical society database to determine the number of malpractice cases filed against a

physician.

Ideally, your physician should offer surgical services in his office as well as in the hospital. Only a surgeon is permitted to operate in a hospital or outpatient ambulatory surgery center. You should inquire at the local hospital if a surgeon has privileges to perform the particular procedure in question.

Once you have answered these questions accurately, research the topic/procedure you are considering. There are many sources to consider in addition to the Internet, such as The American Society of Plastic Surgeons, libraries, etc. Read as much material as is necessary to help you understand the realistic results you might expect. By understanding the procedure and options, a patient can better determine what is actually needed.

During your initial consultation it is advised that you meet primarily with the surgeon. Paying a modest consultation fee and spending 30-45 minutes directly with a plastic surgeon is money well spent. The surgeon should spend considerable time educating you, after which a specific dis-



cussion regarding your condition follows. You should feel comfortable with the surgeon and never be coerced into scheduling any procedure after one visit.

Rather than relying on photographs of previous patients, which show only the surgeon's best results, ask to talk to other patients who have undergone the same procedure, preferably recently performed and perhaps patients after a number of years.

The cosmetic surgery patient, if properly educated, holds a great advantage in interviewing his/her prospective cosmetic surgeon. The patient will always benefit from seeking a second opinion when considering cosmetic plastic surgery.